

All-Hazards Communications Unit Training and Recognition Program Update

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Overview



- Program Background
 - History & Related Documents
 - COML & COMT Training
- Document Review and Recent Updates
- Recommended Revisions to the Recognition Procedure
- Possible Approval; Next Steps



PROGRAM HISTORY & RELATED DOCUMENTS

Program History



- In late 2008, the Department Of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) released a bulletin describing the newly developed Communications Unit Leader (COML) training initiative and provided that each state may determine how its COMLs are credentialed.
- In 2009, OEC began the national rollout of the training program. That same year, the Public Safety Communications Advisory Commission (PSCC) tasked its sub-committee, the Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee (SIEC), with forming policy recommendations for the development of a Communications Unit Leader (COML) training and recognition program.

Program History, *cont.*



- Throughout 2009 and 2010, the SIEC's Communications Working Group, staffed by the PSIC Office and subject matter experts, addressed issues related to COML training, certification and logistical matters in the development of a formal COML Recognition Program for the State.
- In 2010, the PSCC approved the incorporation of a strategic objective (#10.4) to implement a COML training program and determine a credentialing protocol into Arizona's Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan (SCIP).
- In alignment with the SCIP strategic initiative, the Communications Working Group drafted the original *Arizona Regional COML Recognition Procedure*, which was approved by the PSCC on July 20, 2010.

Program History, *cont.*



- On August 17, 2010, the SIEC officially formed the National Incident Management System Communications Unit (NIMS-CU) Workgroup and approved its *Policies and Procedures*.
 - The NIMS-CU Workgroup is the official body that reviews candidate qualifications and recognizes qualified Arizona Regional All-Hazards COMLs in the State of Arizona, under the direction of the SIEC and with the support of the PSIC Office.
 - Workgroup members are required to have knowledge of the positions, skills and abilities needed by candidates seeking recognition. They serve until replaced; SIEC may take action at any time to revise the Workgroup's membership.
- On October 19, 2010, SIEC appointed 5 individuals to the Workgroup, and they began reviewing candidate application materials in 2011.

Program History, *cont.*



- At the State level, the importance of utilizing trained and qualified Communications Unit personnel—including the COML and the Communications Unit Technician (COMT)—is recognized.
 - In association with the development of the training and recognition program, the PSIC Office has continued to post and update Communications Unit related resources on its COML webpage at: www.azpsic.gov/library/coml.
 - Additionally, the National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP) Goal 2 Assessments that were conducted throughout 2011 identified the need for additional COML training and deployment.

Program History, *cont.*



- The need to train and certify qualified personnel is also reaffirmed at the National level, as evidenced by an increase in outreach materials that have been made available at the federal level:
 - OEC developed a brochure, The COML: A Valuable Resource for Incident Commanders, which is available on the PISC website at: www.azpsic.gov/library/coml
 - OEC has posted an informational video about the national COML training program on their website at: <http://www.dhs.gov/communications-unit-leader-training>
 - OEC is conducting outreach to inform States about the importance of having a formalized COML recognition process through Technical Assistance offerings and conference presentations.

Program History, *cont.*



- In addition to the resources posted online, OEC, in collaboration with the National Council of Statewide Interoperability Coordinators (NCSWIC), has identified best practice models for state COML Recognition Programs and they have begun scheduling and hosting best practice webinars.
 - The Credentialing Webinars feature varying approaches to help SWICs gain a better understanding of how COMLs are becoming credentialed in other areas of the country in order to create or improve their own State processes.
 - The interactive Certification Recognition / Best Practices webinar featuring Arizona was presented on July 31, 2012. The SWIC provided an overview of the State's COML recognition program.



COML & COMT TRAINING

Initial COML Training



- The All-Hazards COML course, which is led by two DHS approved COML Instructors, trains emergency responders to serve as COMLs during all hazards emergency operations.
- During the national COML training rollout in 2009, 6 courses were offered across Arizona:

Dates	County (Location)	Funding Source
June 17 – 19, 2009	Maricopa (Phoenix)	Phoenix Fire Federal Grant
July 15 – 17, 2009	Coconino (Flagstaff)	Phoenix Fire Federal Grant
August 5 – 7, 2009	Pima (Tucson)	Phoenix Fire Federal Grant
August 12 – 14, 2009	Maricopa (Phoenix)	Phoenix Fire Federal Grant
August 19 – 21, 2009	Yuma (Yuma)	Phoenix Fire Federal Grant
Sept 29 – Oct 1, 2009	Cochise (Sierra Vista)	Federal Rollout Program

Training Coordination Procedure



- In 2011, the PSIC Office, in coordination with ADEM and the NIMS-CU Workgroup, developed the *Arizona Communications Unit Training Coordination Procedure*, which describes the process for coordinating All-Hazards Communications Unit training in the State.
- The procedure, which was approved by the SIEC on March 15, 2011, also documents the cooperation between the SWIC and the State Training Officer (STO) agency (ADEM).
- Course enrollment and Instructor selection are handled cooperatively by both agencies, so the SWIC has access to class and roster information.

Recent COML Training



- As prescribed by the Training Coordination Procedure, the PSIC Office has collaborated with the ADEM and counties for 6 additional training offerings:

Dates	County/Location	Funding Source
October 17 – 20, 2011	Maricopa (Phoenix)	County ADEM Training Funds
Nov 28 – Dec 1, 2011	Mohave (Kingman)	2010 IECGP
December 5 – 8, 2011	Pima (Tucson)	2010 IECGP
February 7 – 10, 2012	Maricopa (Glendale)	EMI Sponsored Course
April 2 – 5, 2012	Cochise (Sierra Vista)	2010 IECGP
April 30 – May 3, 2012	Coconino (Flagstaff)	2010 IECGP

- Funds remain, and additional courses are being planned for the end of 2012 and into 2013.

COMT Training



- The All-Hazards COMT course, which is led by two trained and federally recognized COMT Instructors, trains emergency responders on practices and procedures common to COMTs during all hazards emergency operations.
- Due to the technical nature of the training, course enrollment is limited to 15 students.
- To date, 2 All-Hazards COMT courses have been held in AZ:
 - October 24 – 28, 2011: Pima County (Tucson), offered through OEC Technical Assistance
 - April 9 - 13, 2012: Maricopa County (Phoenix), utilizing SHSGP 2011 training funds
- Two additional courses are being planned in Phoenix and Yuma.

COML Field Day



- The PSIC Office is planning to offer a COML Training Field Day in Maricopa County utilizing IECGP 2010 funds.
- The purpose of the Training Field Day is to facilitate development of emergency responder skills and capabilities through hands-on training for individuals who have completed the initial COML classroom course. Individuals who have completed a COMT course in Arizona will also be invited to benefit from this training opportunity.
- The Field Day was originally targeted for delivery in Spring or Fall 2012, but has been postponed to a date later in the year due to procurement delays.

COML Numbers Snapshot



- As of August 2012, there are 18 recognized COMLs representing agencies from 5 counties. They are listed on the AZ Regional All-Hazards Communications Resource List on the PSIC Website at: <http://www.azpsic.gov/library/coml/>.

	COML-Trained	Recognized
Discipline		
Emergency Management	17	4
Fire	55	5
Health Care	2	1
Law Enforcement	58	4
Other	54	4
Totals	186 <i>(in AZ; since 2009)</i>	18 <i>(as of August 2012)</i>



DOCUMENT REVIEW AND RECENT UPDATES

Review Process



- Program procedures are required to be reviewed annually and updated as needed.
- On June 26, 2012, the Workgroup held its annual meeting to review and revise the documents:
 - Following SIEC guidance, the documents were revised with a focus on expanding the scope of the Arizona Regional COML Recognition Procedure to allow for the incorporation of other All-Hazards Communications Unit positions.
 - Information about additional updates to the federal All-Hazards COML program (e.g., changes to training course length) and practices from other states were leveraged to move forward and improve our State's recognition program.

Recent Updates



- The NIMS-CU Workgroup Policies and Procedures and Communications Unit Training Coordination Procedure were updated and approved by the SIEC on August 14.
- The draft Arizona All-Hazards Communications Unit Recognition Procedures is being presented to the PSCC for consideration and possible approval today.



RECOMMENDED REVISIONS TO THE RECOGNITION PROCEDURE

Recommended Procedure Revisions



- The revised Recognition Procedure integrates the new SOP template to provide document sections consistent with other SOPs, including a Record of Changes page.
- The title has been updated to “Arizona Regional All-Hazards **Communications Unit** Recognition Procedure.”
- It describes the national process for certification and the requirements for requesting Arizona Regional recognition for Communications Unit positions that have an associated DHS approved curriculum and All-Hazards Position Taskbook.
 - Currently, only the COML and COMT positions meet this criteria.
 - Eventually, other positions, such as the Incident Communications Center Manager (INCM) and the Radio Operator (RADO), will as well.

Recommended Procedure Revisions, *cont.*



- **1.1 – Background (*new*):** Describes NIMS, the Incident Command System (ICS), and provides an overview of the Communications Unit
- **1.3 – Scope:** Includes notation that “Individuals interested in serving only at the local Agency level are not obligated to adhere to the following procedures, unless required by their Agency”
- **1.4 – Definitions:** Removed definition of COML; Moved definition of Certifying Official into this section
- **2 – National Certification Process Overview (*new*):** Details the minimum national requirements for certification
- **2.2 – Position Taskbook:** Explains role of the Taskbook in the certification process

Recommended Procedure Revisions, *cont.*



- **2.3 – Agency Certification:** Further solidifies necessity of the individual to be certified by his/her agency
 - Individuals seeking certification in an All-Hazards Communications Unit position should follow the certification process established by their Agency
- **3 – Arizona Regional Recognition (*new*):** Reintegrates the application and Taskbook requirements that are specific to Arizona's Recognition Program and defines the review process
 - Must complete the nationally recommended certification process first
 - Must be certified by an Arizona Agency
 - Must submit a complete and separate Taskbook for each position for which an individual desires consideration for recognition

Recommended Revisions, *cont.*



- **3.5 – Recognition Renewal:** Describes process in further detail
 - Prior to the end of each recognition period, individuals must provide:
 - » Certification by an Arizona Agency affirming that they continue to meet all requirements for qualification
 - » Documentation of experience in formalized and recognized communications training, exercises (full-scale or functional), incidents and/or events within the three (3) year recognition period
 - Individuals who fail to provide the required renewal request documentation prior to the expiration of the three (3) year term will be removed from the Resource List
 - Individuals who submit renewal request documentation prior to the expiration of the three (3) year term will remain on the Resource List until their renewal application is acted upon by the Workgroup
 - Renewal applications will be evaluated by the Workgroup during an Application Review Meeting

Recommended Revisions, *cont.*



- **Appendices A & B:** Contain the updated recognition forms, which are applicable to all Communications Unit positions
 - AZ Regional All-Hazards Communications Unit Recognition Submission Checklist (Appendix A)
 - AZ Regional All-Hazards Communications Unit Recognition Agency Certification Form (Appendix B)
- **Resource List:** The Arizona Regional All-Hazards COML Resource List was restructured by county and modified to include multiple positions. It is now the Arizona Regional All-Hazards Communications Unit Resource List

Next Steps



- If the Arizona Regional All-Hazards Communications Unit Recognition Procedure is approved by the PSCC, it will be posted on the PSIC website and sent to the interested parties list (about 900 people).
- Additional resources will be added or updated and posted on the PSIC COML webpage, including:
 - *UPDATE!* - Communications Unit Recognition Submission Checklist
 - *UPDATE!* - Communications Unit Agency Certification Form
 - *NEW!* - Communications Unit Position Descriptions
 - *NEW!* - Arizona All-Hazards COMT Taskbook
 - *UPDATE!* - Taskbook FAQs that integrate the COMT Taskbook

Next Steps



Discussion; Questions? Possible Approval

Thank You!

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